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DEPT FOR AIT/W, EAP/TC, INR/EAP

FROM AIT KAOHSIUNG BRANCH OFFICE

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SUBJECT: Kaohsiung Vice Mayor Chiu Tai-san on Frank Hsieh's Presidential Candidacy

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¶1. (SBU) Summary: Kaohsiung Vice Mayor Chiu Tai-san recently told AIT/K that it is widely anticipated within DPP circles that presidential candidate Frank Hsieh will select Kaohsiung's former acting Mayor Yeh Chu-lan as his running mate. Despite a great deal of discontent in the party initially over Hsieh's primary victory, DPP members will pull out all stops to see him elected, Chiu said. Hsieh is a strong leader who will compromise as necessary but also hold the line as needed on cross-Straight policy, he added. End summary.

Presidential Election - Running Mate and Issues

¶2. (SBU) Kaohsiung City Vice Mayor Chiu Tai-san recently predicted to AIT/K that DPP presidential candidate Frank Hsieh will select Yeh Chu-lan as his running mate. DPP supporters will fully back Hsieh's choice, Chiu said, because "the winner takes all, and therefore Frank Hsieh has the right to choose his running mate."

¶3. (SBU) Chiu said it will not become clear until after October what issues will resonate with Taiwan voters in the 2008 presidential election. As the campaigning starts to gather steam in October, President Chen will skillfully throw out a new issue every two weeks in the media to test the reaction of the people, Chiu suggested. Any issue advanced by Chen that draws particular attention from voters will be in the forefront of the presidential campaign, he added.

Frank Hsieh - Full of Tactics but No Cross-Straight Policy

¶4. (SBU) To most people Hsieh may seem flexible and willing to compromise, Chiu said, but he is actually a tactical thinker who maneuvers to achieve his goals. Hsieh does not have a publicly defined person or group identified as his "think tank", so it is not certain what approach he will take toward cross-Straight issues or potential pressure from China. Hsieh's previous reluctance to clearly express his cross-Straight policy has attracted criticism from Deep Green party members. Once he has formed a campaign team, however, Hsieh's views on important policy issues will become much clearer, Chiu suggested.

President Chen and Frank Hsieh

¶5. (SBU) Chiu predicted that President Chen Shui-bian will be very bored after he finishes his tenure. When asked whether President Chen will retain his influence in Taiwan's political arena, Chiu suggested that will depend on how the next president manages the

relationship and handles his differences with the ex-president. Just as President Chen did not maintain a good relationship with former President Lee Teng-hui, Chiu observed, Hsieh will run the same risk with soon-to-be former President Chen.

Thiele

Young